

Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9031

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EXDIS

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TAGS: PN, PFOR

SUBJ: SECRETARY OF ARMY'S CONVERSATION WITH PANAMANIAN TREATY
NEGOTIATORS

FOR AMBASSADOR BUNKER

1. SECRETARY OF THE ARMY CALLOWAY HAS ASKED THAT THE FOLLOWING
MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION BE PASSED TO AMBASSADOR BUNKER.

2. BEGIN QUOTE. ON THE 10TH OF NOVEMBER I HAD THE OPPORTUNITY
TO SPEND AN HOUR IN INFORMAL DISCUSSION WITH DR. CARLOS A.
LOPEZ GUEVARA, WHO WILL APPARENTLY BE THE CHIEF PANAMANIAN TREATY
NEGOTIATOR. THE OCCASION WAS SOCIAL AND WAS CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD
BY BOTH OF US TO BE UNOFFICIAL. NEVERTHELESS, I THOUGH THE
CONVERSATIONS TO BE SUFFICIENTLY INTERESTING TO BE USEFUL TO
YOU.

HE INDICATED THAT THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO PANAMA IN
THE NEGOTIATIONS ARE PRIDE AND JURISDICTION. SURPRISINGLY, HE DID
NOT MENTION SOVEREIGNTY SPECIFICALLY, BUT THIS MAY NOT BE
SIGNIFICANT, SINCE HE MAY HAVE CONSIDERED THIS AS A PART OF
JURISDICTION.

HE TOOK A MUCH STRONGER POSITION THAN I HAD EXPECTED ON THE
LOCATION OF SOUTHCOM IN PANAMA. HE SAID THAT THE CONTINUATION
OF SOUTHCOM WAS INTOLERABLE AND CLEARLY ILLEGAL. I COUNTERED BY
ASKING IF THERE WERE NOT SOME WAY TO MAKE THE LOCATION OF SOUTH-
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COM A SOURCE OF PRIDE TO PANAMANIAN AS THE MILITARY CONTACT
BETWEEN THE U S AND ALL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES. HE THEN
INDICATED THAT THE OBJECTION WAS NOT TO SOUTHCOM PER SE, BUT
RATHER TO U S INSISTENCE THAT WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO USE PANAMAN-

IAN TERRITORY FOR U S MILITARY PURPOSES. HE SAID THAT IF WE WOULD MOVE SOUTHCOM OUT, THEY MIGHT WELL INVITE US BACK THE NEXT DAY. IT IS IMPORTANT TO THEM THAT WE UNDERSTAND THAT THEY MUST GIVE US THEIR PERMISSION. YOU ARE AWARE OF HOW STRONGLY THE ARMY AND DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF SOUTHCOM IN ITS PRESENT LOCATION. I HOPE THAT NO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION IS GIVEN TO MOVING SOUTHCOM UNLESS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY. IF WE MUST DO SOMETHING, HOWEVER, I FEEL THAT PANAMA MIGHT BE WILLING TO HAVE SOUTHCOM STAY UNDER A LONG-TERM TREATY WHICH WOULD ALLOW SOUTHCOM TO CONTINUE ITS PRESENT MISSION, AND ALSO SAVE FACE FOR PANAMA.

MY EMPHASIS THROUGHOUT ALL OUR DISCUSSION WAS THAT WE SHOULD PUT OURSELVES IN THE PANAMANIAN SHOES AND TRY TO FULLY UNDERSTAND THEIR FEELINGS. SIMILARLY, THEY SHOULD PUT THEMSELVES IN OUR SHOES AND TRY TO UNDERSTAND OUR NATIONAL PRIDE IN THE ACCOMPLISHMENT OF BUILDING AND MAINTAINING THE CANAL, WHILE TRYING TO UNDERSTAND THE ATTITUDE OF OUR CONGRESS. HAVING DONE THIS, OUR MUTUAL HOPE WOULD BE FOR A TREATY THAT WOULD SATISFY THE MOST URGENT NEEDS OF BOTH COUNTRIES, AND THUS BE GOOD FOR BOTH COUNTRIES. I EXPLAINED THAT IN MY OPINION SUCH A POSITIVE APPROACH HAD THE BEST CHANCE FOR SUCCESS.

A FEW OTHER MINOR POINTS: 1) HE STRONGLY SUPPORTS THE THIRD LOCK AS THE NEXT LOGICAL EXPANSION AND IS STRONGLY OPPOSED TO A SEA-LEVEL CANAL. 2) HE INDICATED THAT PUMPING SALT WATER INTO GATUN LAKE IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE. 3) HE STRONGLY FEELS THAT WE SHOULD RENOUNCE JURISDICTION OF SHIPS TRANSITING THE CANAL WHILE MAINTAINING JURISDICTION IF WE WISH FOR SHIPS THAT USE OUR PORT FACILITIES. HE THINKS THIS WOULD HELP US IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD AS WELL AS WITH THE PANAMANIANS, AND WOULD SAVE US FROM EMBARRASSING SITUATIONS SUCH AS THE ONE WE NOW HAVE WITH THE CUBAN SHIP IN GATUN LAKE.

HE ENTHUSIASTICALLY EXPRESSED HIS GOVERNMENT'S ADMIRATION FOR YOU PERSONALLY. HE SEEMED ESPECIALLY PLEASED, SINCE HE FEELS YOU CONFIDENTIAL

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HAVE A STRONG PERSONAL RELATION WITH LEADERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AND THUS WILL HAVE GREAT INFLUENCE WITH PENTAGON OFFICIALS.

HOWARD H. CALLAWAY, SECRETARY OF THE ARMY END QUOTE.

SAYRE

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